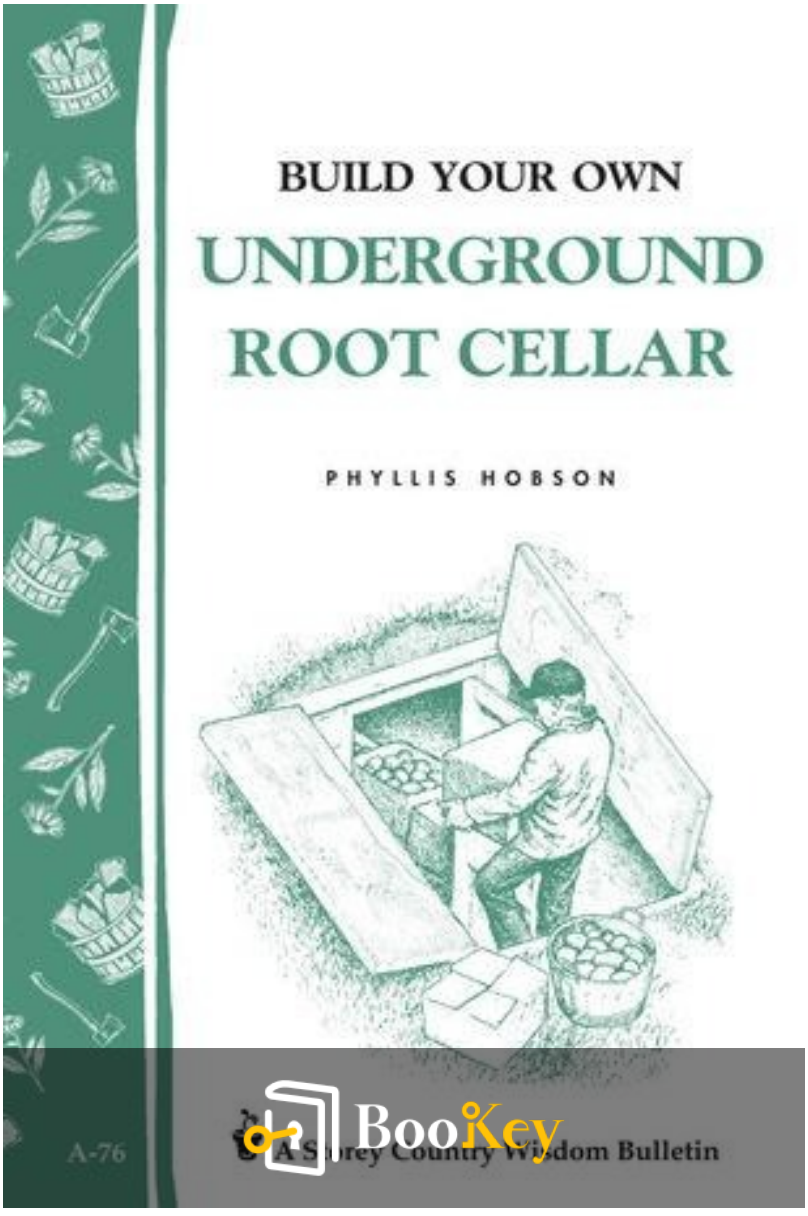
Build Your Own Underground Root Cellar PDF

Phyllis Hobson



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Build Your Own Underground Root Cellar

Master DIY techniques for preserving food sustainably and efficiently.

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About the book

Discover the essential skills for sustainable living with "Build Your Own Underground Root Cellar" by Phyllis Hobson. Part of the renowned Storey's Country Wisdom Bulletins series, this guide provides practical, step-by-step instructions to help you create an efficient root cellar for preserving your harvest. With over 170 titles in the series, the popularity of these bulletins showcases a growing interest in self-sufficiency among both rural and urban dwellers. Embrace the art of self-reliance and enhance your everyday life with this invaluable resource.

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About the author

Phyllis Hobson is a knowledgeable author and seasoned expert in the field of sustainable living and food preservation, renowned for her insightful writings and practical guidance on creating effective root cellars. With a passion for self-sufficiency and a deep appreciation for traditional methods of food storage, Hobson draws on her extensive experience and hands-on expertise to educate readers on maximizing the potential of underground root cellars. Her work reflects a commitment to promoting environmentally friendly practices and resourcefulness, inspiring individuals to reconnect with nature and embrace the art of preserving homegrown harvests. Through "Build Your Own Underground Root Cellar," Hobson provides valuable insights that empower readers to enhance their food storage capabilities while celebrating the simplicity and benefits of underground gardening.

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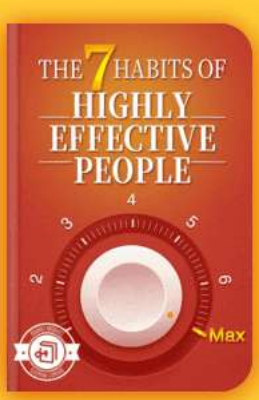

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Summary Content List

Chapter 1 : The Right Location

Chapter 2 : Tools

Chapter 3 : Materials

Chapter 4 : Building the Cellar

Chapter 5 : Adapting the Cellar to Your Needs

Chapter 6 : Get the Most from Your Root Cellar

Chapter 7 : Storage Requirements of Individual Fruits and Vegetables

Chapter 8 : Root Cellar Maintenance

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Chapter 1 Summary : The Right Location

The Right Location

To select the ideal location for a root cellar, consider the following factors:

Optimal Slope and Drainage

- Choose a hillside or slope facing away from prevailing winds.
- Aim for high ground to ensure proper drainage and avoid flooding in low-lying areas.

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Proximity and Accessibility

- Locate the root cellar conveniently to both the kitchen and garden, as frequent visits will be necessary during harvest and early summer.

Avoid Large Trees

- Steer clear of large trees due to their extensive root systems, which can hinder digging and damage cellar walls.

Soil Considerations

- Assess soil type; rocky or hardpan clay may require excavation equipment, while sandy soil may lead to wall collapses and necessitate larger sloping walls.

Special Site Issues

- Identify any unique problems on your land, such as drifting snow or vehicle traffic, and choose locations accordingly to avoid potential issues.

Buildings for Protection

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- A site near the foundation of a house or garage can be advantageous for natural drainage and protection from harsh weather conditions.
Take time to explore your property to find the most suitable location for your root cellar before gathering the necessary tools for construction.

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Example

Key Point:Choosing the right location for your root cellar is crucial to its effectiveness.

Example:Imagine stepping outside to survey your land; you spot a gentle slope where the sun lingers longer, providing necessary warmth. As you walk closer, you note the absence of massive oak trees that could disrupt your digging with their sprawling roots. Visualize placing your root cellar just a few steps away from your vegetable garden, making it easy to store freshly harvested carrots and potatoes for the winter months. You also discover that the soil here is rich and loamy, promising easy excavation and stability for your walls. With a clear path ensuring drainage away from your cellar, you can already feel the excitement of cultivating and enjoying the fruits of your labor.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point:Optimal Location Criteria

Critical Interpretation:The author emphasizes several criteria for selecting the ideal root cellar site, such as drainage, accessibility, and proximity to existing structures. While these recommendations are practical, readers should critically consider that the effectiveness of these factors can vary based on specific regional climate conditions and soil types. For instance, while some experts advocate for high ground to mitigate flooding, others point out that microclimates can significantly influence moisture retention and soil health (see sources like "Soil and Water Conservation Engineering" by William J. Showalter). Thus, assessing local context and adjusting strategies based on empirical evidence may lead to more tailored solutions.

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Chapter 2 Summary : Tools

Category	Tools	Details
Essential Tools	Pointed-ended, long-handled shovel	For digging excavation and footing trench, and moving wet concrete and gravel.
Square-ended trench shovel	To square up the sides and bottom of the footing trench.	
Garden hoe	For spreading wet concrete and mixing concrete and mortar.	
Metal tape measure	At least 20 feet long for measuring.	
Sturdy wheelbarrow	For transporting materials.	
Masonry trowel	To apply mortar between blocks; the wooden handle helps tap blocks in place.	
Mortarboard	To hold mortar as it's applied.	
Jointer tool	To compact mortar in the joints.	
Level	36 to 48 inches long to check plumb and level of the wall.	
Plumb bob	For laying out the footing trench.	
Wooden float	To level the top of the concrete footing.	
Straight 1 x 6 board	8 feet long, marked every 8 inches to check the level of blocks and horizontal mortar joints.	
Mason’s line stretchers	To hold a line taut between corner blocks for guidance.	
Masonry chisel	For cutting blocks.	
Hammer	For pounding chisel, stakes, and nails.	

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Category	Tools	Details
Crosscut saw	To cut lumber.	
Saber or keyhole saw	For cutting the vent hole in the roof.	
Carpenter’s plane	To trim roof rafters.	
Screwdriver	To attach hinges and door handles.	
Wrench	To tighten nuts on the top plate.	
Caulking gun	For caulking around footing and air vent.	
Applicator	For applying waterproofing to wall exterior (brush, roller, trowel, or 6-inch putty knife).	
Making Your Own Tools	Mortarboard	Cut a 12-inch square from ½-inch or ¾-inch plywood.
Wooden float	Cut a piece of 1 x 6 lumber 12 to 14 inches long, attach a handle.	
Line stretcher	Use a metal clip or small corner brace to hold the line taut.	
Jointer tool	Bend ½-inch rod for a handle or improvise with a wooden dowel.	

Tools for Building an Underground Root Cellar

Essential Tools

- Pointed-ended, long-handled shovel: For digging excavation and footing trench, and moving wet concrete and gravel.
- Square-ended trench shovel: To square up the sides and bottom of the footing trench.

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- Garden hoe: For spreading wet concrete and mixing concrete and mortar.
- Metal tape measure: At least 20 feet long for measuring.
- Sturdy wheelbarrow: For transporting materials.
- Masonry trowel: To apply mortar between blocks; the wooden handle helps tap blocks in place.
- Mortarboard: To hold mortar as it's applied.
- Jointer tool: To compact mortar in the joints.
- Level: 36 to 48 inches long to check plumb and level of the wall.
- Plumb bob: For laying out the footing trench.
- Wooden float: To level the top of the concrete footing.
- Straight 1 x 6 board: 8 feet long, marked every 8 inches to check the level of blocks and horizontal mortar joints.
- Mason’s line stretchers: To hold a line taut between corner blocks for guidance.
- Masonry chisel: For cutting blocks.
- Hammer: For pounding chisel, stakes, and nails.
- Crosscut saw: To cut lumber.
- Saber or keyhole saw: For cutting the vent hole in the roof.
- Carpenter’s plane: To trim roof rafters.
- Screwdriver: To attach hinges and door handles.
- Wrench: To tighten nuts on the top plate.
- Caulking gun: For caulking around footing and air vent.

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- Applicator: For applying waterproofing to wall exterior (brush, roller, trowel, or 6-inch putty knife).

Making Your Own Tools

- Mortarboard: Cut a 12-inch square from ½-inch or ¾-inch plywood.
- Wooden float: Cut a piece of 1 x 6 lumber 12 to 14 inches long, attach a handle.
- Line stretcher: Use a metal clip or small corner brace to hold the line taut.
- Jointer tool: Bend ½-inch rod for a handle or improvise with a wooden dowel.

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Chapter 3 Summary : Materials

Section	Content
Construction Steps Overview	The material list is organized by construction phases for easier buying and budgeting. Bulk purchases can save on delivery costs.
Step 2	16 stakes (2" x 2" x 3'), 8 boards (1" x 3" x 4'6"), 150' mason's line or stout string.
Step 4	30 stakes (1" x 2" x 12"), 1 cubic yd. of ready-mix concrete.
Step 5	24 hollow core concrete blocks (8" x 8" x 16"), 4 hollow core corner l bags of masonry cement, 11 cubic yd. of mortar sand.
Step 6	40' perforated plastic drain tile, 2 (90° elbows), 2 cubic yd. of gravel or stone.
Step 7	4 boards (2" x 8") of various lengths, scrap lumber for bracing.
Step 8	262 hollow core concrete blocks, 56 corner blocks, lintel blocks, reinforcing bars, 1 cubic yd. of concrete mix.
Step 9	50 cubic ft. of loose insulation, 20 sq. ft. of hardware cloth, 14 anchor bolts.
Step 10	Pressure-treated lumber for stairway, ½" exterior plywood, 2 gal. of wood preservative.
Step 11	Various boards for rafters, plywood, roofing materials.
Step 12	Plywood, boards, self-stick weatherstrip, plastic screen, sewer pipe materials.
Step 13	4 gal. of roofing tar, 12 bales of straw, 100-foot roll of plastic sheeting.
Step 14	Additional materials for both interior and hatchway doors.
Wood Treatment and Material Storage	All lumber treated with wood preservative; store materials to prevent moisture exposure.
Cost Considerations	Total estimated cost around $1,200; using salvaged materials can reduce costs. Structural integrity prioritized over aesthetics; alternatives to concrete blocks can save money.

Materials Needed for Building a Root Cellar

1. Construction Steps Overview

- The material list is organized by construction phases to

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facilitate buying and budgeting over time.
- Consider bulk purchases to save on delivery costs.

2. Step-by-Step Materials

Step 2

- 16 stakes (2" x 2" x 3')
- 8 boards (1" x 3" x 4'6")
- Mason's line or stout string (150')

Step 4

- 30 stakes (1" x 2" x 12")
- Ready-mix concrete (1 cubic yd. or equivalent)

Step 5

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Chapter 1 of 5
Preface
Since ancient times, people have been crazy for red. For example, red was used for European noble women's makeup and kings' and cardinals' robes. The popularity of red was evident. Throughout history, Britain is not the only country that mobilized state power to protect their secret colors.
The secret to creating a bright red called carmine was hidden for hundreds of years by Spain. This color, as bright as a ruby, is one of the reddest dyes that can be made in nature, so it has long been a favorite in the painter's paint box. But where does this red come from?
After the Spanish Conquistadors set their feet on the lands of South America, they found cochineals, a white parasite living on cactuses.
They used machines similar to a vacuum
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Chapter 4 Summary : Building the Cellar

Building the Cellar

Step 1: Excavating

- Dig a hole measuring 16 feet long, 12 feet wide, and 4 feet deep. Include a 4-foot wide entrance ramp that slopes down from ground level.

Step 2: Marking Off

- Mark off an area for the walls using stakes. Ensure corners are square and outline the footing trench by marking a rectangle 1½ feet outside the initial area.

Step 3: Digging the Footing

- Dig a trench 16 inches wide and 9 inches deep, ensuring straightness and square corners.

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Step 4: Pouring the Footing

- Place stakes in the trench to ensure a level footing. After leveling, fill with a 1:2:4 concrete mix. Allow at least three days for curing.

Step 5: Laying the First Course

- Perform a trial run with blocks to check fit. Set them with mortar, ensuring they are level and apply mortar tooling for waterproofing.

Step 6: Laying the Drain Tiles

- Pour gravel around the perimeter and place perforated drain tiles sloped for drainage, digging additional holes for gravel collection.

Step 7: Marking the Doorway

- Create a 32-inch rough opening for the entrance door, ensuring even placement to simplify fitting.

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Step 8: Building the Walls

- Lay the blocks for each course, beginning with corners and using a mason's line for alignment. Install a lintel above the doorway.

Step 9: Insulating and Topping the Walls

- Insulate the entrance wall and fill the top course of blocks with concrete, embedding anchor bolts.

Step 10: Building the Stairway and Doors

- Construct stairway support and tread frameworks with pressure-treated lumber. Build doors with insulation and 2 × 4 frames.

Step 11: Roofing the Cellar

- Attach 2 × 8 boards and rafters to form the roof; cover with plywood and layers of roofing material.

Step 12: Installing the Air Vent

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- Cut a vent hole in the roof and install a screened hatch for ventilation.

Step 13: Waterproofing the Exterior

- Apply roofing tar and cover with straw and plastic sheeting. Coat block walls with cement plaster and foundation coating.

Step 14: Installing the Doors

- Fit the interior and hatchway doors, ensuring proper insulation and functionality.

Step 15: Covering the Cellar

- Fill around the walls with excavated soil and cover the roof completely. Consider seeding for stability and aesthetics.

Additional Note: Simplified Alternatives

- For those unable to build a concrete block cellar, simpler storage solutions such as basement root cells or pits can be implemented, as referenced in Bulletin A-87.

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Chapter 5 Summary : Adapting the Cellar to Your Needs

Adapting the Cellar to Your Needs

An 8-foot by 12-foot root cellar can accommodate a year's food supply for a family of 6 and can also function as a short-term storm shelter. For larger families seeking additional emergency shelter, consider increasing the cellar’s length while maintaining its width at 8 feet, which ensures structural stability and cost-effectiveness.

Sizing Recommendations

-
Standard Size
: 8 feet by 12 feet for a family of 6.
-
Extended Size
: For added shelter capacity, increase to 8 feet by 20 feet for 6 adults.
-

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Length Adjustment
: Extend by increments of 16 inches if surpassing 16 feet, incorporating a partition wall for structural integrity and convenience.

Optional Features for Convenience

1.
Electrical Wiring
:
- Non-essential but useful; can be added later.
- Install underground cable for lights, which can also provide winter warmth.

2.
Concrete Steps
:
- Consider for longevity if moisture is an issue.
- Construct using a wooden form and pour alongside footings to minimize costs.

3.
Walling the Stairwell
:
- Use concrete steps as a basis for block walls to strengthen structure.

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4.

Concrete Floor

:

- Although a dirt floor is traditional for food storage, a concrete floor is more suitable for shelter use.

- An 8-foot by 12-foot slab can be poured personally or by professionals.

5.

Sump Pump Installation

:

- Essential in areas with underground water to divert water away from the cellar.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point:Sizing and structural recommendations for root cellars may overlook environmental factors.

Critical Interpretation:While the author's guidance on sizing a root cellar as an 8-foot by 12-foot structure may appear practical for storing food and providing shelter, it lacks consideration for regional variations in soil type, groundwater levels, and local climate, which can significantly influence the effectiveness and longevity of such structures. For instance, a study by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service highlights the importance of soil characteristics in agricultural practices. Thus, readers should critically assess the author's recommendations and consult regional resources and experts to tailor their building plans to local environmental conditions.

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Chapter 6 Summary : Get the Most from Your Root Cellar

Get the Most from Your Root Cellar

To optimize your root cellar, utilize thermometers and a humidity gauge to monitor natural temperature and humidity variations. Typically, the coolest and most humid area is near the floor by the door, while the warmest and driest is at the ceiling towards the back.

Storage Containers

A variety of containers can be used in your root cellar, including:

-
Crates or Baskets:
Ideal for air-circulating foods like potatoes and apples.

-
Mesh Bags:
Suitable for onions and garlic which require warm, dry storage.

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-

Barrels and Tubs:

Metal or wooden barrels, metal tubs, and even sections of tile can be used for other produce.

All containers should be elevated from the dirt floor to avoid issues like rotting, rusting, and pest infestations. Crude wood pallets from appliance or garden centers work well for this purpose.

Shelving Options

For added organization and strength, consider heavy-duty metal shelving or build your own using 2 × 12 lumber and 2 × 4 shelf braces. Ensure vertical supports are added every 4 feet and attached to the roof supports, with a piece of scrap aluminum or plastic underneath to prevent rotting. Treat wooden boards with commercial wood preservative for longevity.

Shelves should be cut to fit and not nailed down for ease of cleaning and airflow management.

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Example

Key Point:Monitoring Temperature and Humidity

Example:To ensure optimal preservation of your vegetables and fruits in the root cellar, imagine checking your thermometer and humidity gauge each week, adjusting the placement of your produce according to the readings you receive. This way, you could consciously choose to store your apples near the cooler, damp floor, maximizing their longevity, while keeping your onions up high where it’s warmer and drier, thereby preventing spoilage.

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Chapter 7 Summary : Storage Requirements of Individual Fruits and Vegetables

Storage Requirements of Individual Fruits and Vegetables

General Guidelines

- Store only the best quality produce.
- Remove injured or overripe items before storage.
- Inspect stored produce weekly and discard any spoiled items.
- Avoid washing produce before storage to prevent moisture accumulation, which can lead to mold and spoilage.
- Separate strong-flavored vegetables from delicate ones to avoid flavor transfer.
- Use layers of dried leaves, straw, or crumpled newspaper to absorb excess odors.

Specific Storage Conditions

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- Onions, pumpkins, and squash require dry conditions with good air circulation; onions can be braided and hung, while large squash and pumpkins should be elevated.
- Cure squash before bringing them into the cellar.
- Green tomatoes can be stored in layers of straw or newspaper for 4 to 6 months in a warm, dry area.

Root Vegetables and Storage Methods

- Root vegetables (beets, carrots, parsnips, rutabagas, salsify, turnips) fare best stored in containers layered with moist sand and can last 9 to 12 months.
- Store potatoes and apples in separate containers to prevent potatoes from sprouting due to apple gas release.
- Cabbages can be stored 3 heads deep in crates or upside down with roots intact, wrapped in newspaper or buried in leaves.
- Celery, head lettuce, endive, and escarole should be replanted in moist sand in the root cellar for 1 to 2 months of storage.
- Cauliflower, brussel sprouts, and kohlrabi can be treated similarly for 2 to 3 months, with leaves removed.

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Chapter 8 Summary : Root Cellar Maintenance

Root Cellar Maintenance

A well-constructed root cellar requires minimal maintenance, but it is essential to check it daily, especially during the first winter, to ensure temperatures remain above freezing. In cold weather, close the air vent and consider using a small heat source, like a kerosene lantern or light bulbs, but avoid excess heat.

Annual Cleaning and Care

Once a year, conduct a thorough cleaning and airing of the cellar to prevent plant disease and insect infestations. Ideal timing is early summer, just before harvest. During the cleaning process:

1. Open the doors for 2-3 days.
2. Remove all containers and shelves, scrubbing them with soapy water.
3. Allow them to air dry in the sun for a couple of days.

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4. Sweep or rake the floor and whitewash the walls.
5. Discard any sand, sawdust, or leaves from stored root vegetables and replace with fresh material in the fall.

Following these steps will help maintain an effective and healthy root cellar for food preservation.

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Best Quotes from Build Your Own Underground Root Cellar by Phyllis Hobson with Page Numbers

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Chapter 1 | Quotes From Pages 7-8

1. Remember, from harvest season until early summer — during the worst weather of the year — you will probably be visiting it almost every day.
2. You know your land better than anyone else, so look it over for any special problems, such as drifting snow or conflicting traffic patterns.
3. Sometimes the best site for a root cellar is near the foundation wall of a house or garage.
4. Walk around your land until you find the location that’s right for you.

Chapter 2 | Quotes From Pages 9-11

1. Sometimes called a story-board. Pair of mason’s line stretchers to hold a line taut between corner

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blocks as a guide for each course.

2. You can save money by making your own tools from scraps.

3. Sturdy wheelbarrow. Masonry trowel to apply mortar between blocks.

4. Make Your Own Tools.

Chapter 3 | Quotes From Pages 12-20

1. The only thing that counts here is size and strength.

2. You can cut the cost of the cellar in half by substituting used railroad ties, stacked horizontally, cedar logs set on end, or large stones mortared in place for blocks.

3. Some of this was used for stakes and framing. Scrap lumber of different sizes can be used instead.

4. Be prepared to store all materials under cover to keep them as dry as possible before and during construction.

5. Wet sand will add a great deal of water to the concrete mix and possibly weaken it.

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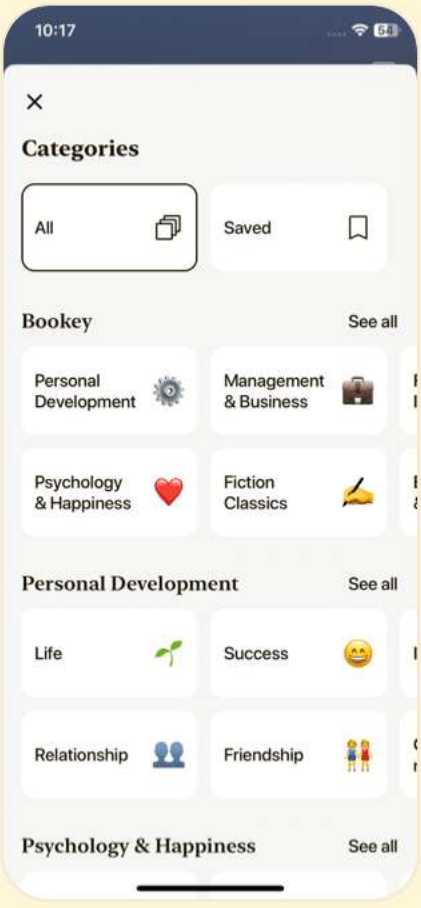

Chapter 4 | Quotes From Pages 21-43

1. Earth is the cheapest insulator for your cellar, so don’t stint on this step.
2. To mark off a footing trench, pound 4 more stakes in a rectangle 1½ feet outside the marked area.
3. The mortar should be 1 inch thick by 8 inches wide by the length of 2 blocks.
4. As you finish each course, move the mason’s line up to the next corner block.
5. If building a concrete block root cellar is a bigger undertaking than you are ready for this year, you can make simpler root cellars.

Chapter 5 | Quotes From Pages 44-46

1. An 8-foot by 12-foot root cellar is large enough to store a year’s supply of food for a family of 6 and serve as a short-term storm shelter.
2. You can increase the length of the cellar, but it is advisable to keep it 8 feet wide. This span is strong enough to support the weight of the earth piled on top, yet inexpensive to

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build.

3. If you increase the length to more than 16 feet, however, you should add a partition wall across the center of the cellar.
4. Unless you want to keep your cellar to the bare necessities, the convenience of some additional features may make them worth the additional cost.
5. Electrical wiring. Electric lights are not a necessity in a root cellar. You can always use a flashlight or a lantern.
6. If soil moisture is a problem in your area, you may want to substitute concrete steps for the wooden steps for greater durability.
7. Although a dirt floor is preferable for storing food, a concrete floor is more comfortable for shelter use.
8. If underground water is a problem in your area, you may want to install a sump pump with a hose to pump the water to another area.

Chapter 6 | Quotes From Pages 47-48

1. With a few thermometers and a humidity gauge,

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you can learn to take advantage of the natural temperature and humidity differences that will exist in your cellar.

2. Almost any container you have on hand or can buy cheaply can be used in your root cellar.
3. Other produce can be stored in wooden or metal barrels, metal tubs and pails, plastic or metal garbage and trash containers, or sections of 18-inch and 24-inch tile.
4. For maximum strength, there should be a vertical support every 4 feet, and these supports should be attached to the roof supports.

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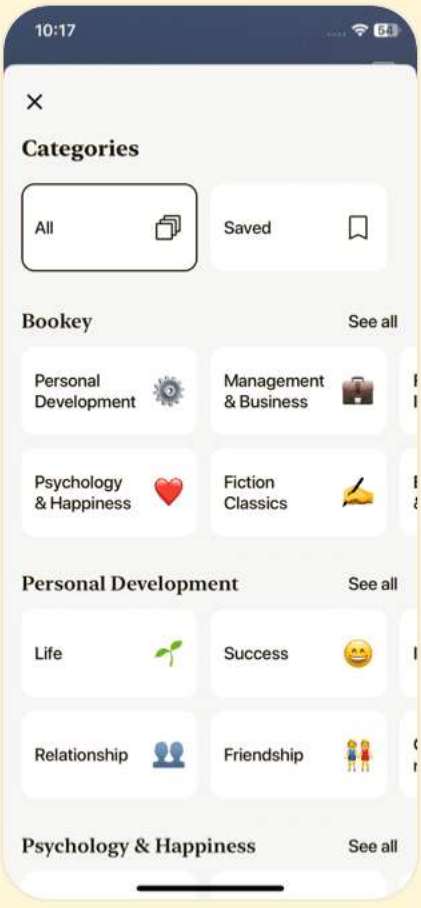

Chapter 7 | Quotes From Pages 49-50

1. Store only the best produce.
2. Inspect your produce every week to remove any that has spoiled.
3. Do not wash produce before storing.
4. Store strong-flavored vegetables...separated from the more delicately flavored produce, or they will transmit flavors.
5. Packing all fruits and vegetables in layers of dried leaves, straw, or crumpled newspaper will help absorb excess odors.
6. Properly maintained they should keep for 9 to 12 months.
7. Cabbages keep well when they are stored 3 heads deep in crates or baskets, or stacked upside down, roots intact, on shelves.

Chapter 8 | Quotes From Pages 51-52

1. A well-constructed root cellar does not require much maintenance, but you will need to check it at least once a day the first winter to make sure the temperature stays above freezing.

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2. During the annual clean-up, open the doors as far as possible for 2 or 3 days, take out all the containers and shelves and scrub them well with soapy water, then let them air in the sun a day or two.
3. The mission of Storey Publishing is to serve our customers by publishing practical information that encourages personal independence in harmony with the environment.
4. The information in this bulletin is true and complete to the best of our knowledge.

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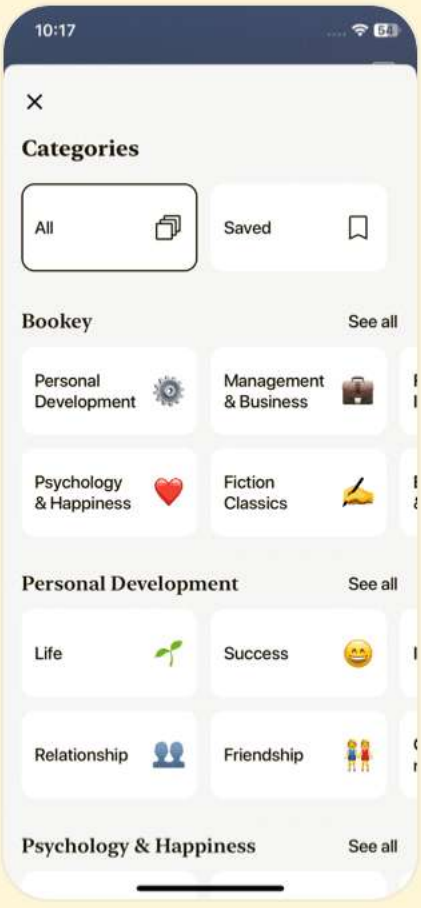

Build Your Own Underground Root Cellar Questions

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Chapter 1 | The Right Location| Q&A

1.Question

What factors should you consider when selecting the right location for a root cellar?

Answer:When selecting the right location for a root cellar, consider the following factors: it should be on a hillside or slope facing away from winds for protection; choose the highest ground for optimal drainage and avoid low-lying areas susceptible to flooding; proximity to the kitchen and garden is essential for frequent access during harvest season; stay away from large trees as their extensive roots complicate digging; assess the soil type—rocky or hardpan clay requires excavation equipment, while sandy soil may necessitate a larger hole due to collapsing walls; and look for any potential

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problems like drifting snow or vehicular traffic that could damage the cellar.

2.Question

Why is high ground preferred for a root cellar location?

Answer:High ground is preferred for a root cellar location primarily for drainage purposes. Low-lying areas are prone to water accumulation, which can lead to flooding the cellar, especially in the spring when snow melts or heavy rains occur. By choosing a higher elevation, you significantly reduce the risk of water infiltration into the cellar.

3.Question

How can nearby structures benefit a root cellar?

Answer:Building a root cellar near a foundation wall of a house or garage can provide multiple benefits: the existing structure helps manage drainage issues, protects the cellar entrance from harsh winter snow drifts, shields it from the hot summer sun, and guards against strong winds throughout the year. This combination of protection and convenience makes it a practical choice.

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4.Question

What are the implications of poor soil selection for a root cellar?

Answer:Poor soil selection can have critical implications for a root cellar: if the soil is too rocky or consists of hardpan clay, hand digging becomes laborious, requiring machinery for excavation, complicating the process. Conversely, if the soil is too sandy, it may collapse as you dig, necessitating a larger hole to create sloping walls, which further complicates construction and storage viability.

5.Question

How can evaluating your land help you choose the right root cellar site?

Answer:Evaluating your land allows you to identify special challenges that could impact your root cellar construction. By assessing aspects like potential snow drift areas, vehicular traffic paths, and unique soil characteristics, you will better understand the suitability of different locations and thus choose the most functional and safe site for your root cellar.

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6.Question

What is the first step after selecting the location for a root cellar?

Answer:After selecting the location for a root cellar, the first step is to gather the necessary tools for construction. This preparation is crucial for ensuring that you have everything you need to begin digging and building your cellar efficiently.

Chapter 2 | Tools| Q&A

1.Question

What tools are essential for building an underground root cellar and how can they be utilized effectively?

Answer:Essential tools include a pointed-ended shovel for digging, a square-ended trench shovel to shape the trench, a garden hoe for spreading concrete, and a metal tape measure for accurate measurements. These tools enable you to excavate properly, prepare the footing trench, and ensure the structural integrity of the root cellar.

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2.Question

How can you save money on tools when building your root cellar?

Answer:You can save money by making your own tools from scraps, such as creating a mortarboard from plywood or a wooden float using 1 x 6 lumber. This not only reduces expenses but also fosters creativity and resourcefulness in the building process.

3.Question

Why is it important to use a level and plumb bob while constructing the root cellar?

Answer:Using a level and plumb bob ensures that the walls of the root cellar are constructed accurately, preventing structural issues that could compromise its integrity and functionality. Accurate alignment is crucial for the cellar to maintain environmental conditions suitable for storing vegetables.

4.Question

What role does a masonry chisel and hammer play in building a root cellar?

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Answer:A masonry chisel, paired with a hammer, is used to cut blocks to the necessary sizes. Precision in cutting is vital for fitting blocks snugly together, enhancing the strength and efficiency of the construction.

5.Question

What creative uses of improvised tools are mentioned, and how do they demonstrate resourcefulness?

Answer:The use of a metal clip as a line stretcher and a ½-inch rod bent into a jointing tool exemplify how one can adapt available materials to meet construction needs. This approach showcases the spirit of DIY building and ingenuity, turning everyday items into functional tools.

6.Question

How does the content encourage a practical approach to tool selection for novice builders?

Answer:The content emphasizes that familiar tools can often be found in personal garages, promoting a practical and approachable mindset for first-time builders. It encourages individuals to seek what they already have before purchasing

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new equipment, which can reduce costs and increase confidence.

7.Question

In what ways does the chapter highlight the importance of preparation before undertaking a building project?

Answer:The chapter underscores the need for thorough preparation by providing a detailed list of tools and their functions. Proper preparation ensures efficiency during the construction process and minimizes delays caused by missing equipment.

8.Question

How does community resource-sharing benefit DIY projects like building a root cellar?

Answer:Community resource-sharing, such as renting specialized tools like a heavy-duty wheelbarrow, can make projects more feasible and reduce costs. This practice fosters collaboration and support within the community, enhancing the DIY experience.

Chapter 3 | Materials| Q&A

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1.Question

What materials are necessary for constructing a root cellar according to Chapter 3?

Answer:A comprehensive list of materials is provided including concrete blocks, lumber, reinforcement bars, drainage tiles, insulation, and various tools for construction. Specific quantities and dimensions for each material are outlined by construction steps, making it easy to gather materials progressively.

2.Question

How can building a root cellar be cost-effective?

Answer:The total cost of construction is around $1,200, but this expense can be amortized over 20 years. To cut costs, you can use secondhand materials like used concrete blocks, scrap lumber, or recycled doors, which significantly lowers expenses while maintaining functionality.

3.Question

Why is it important to keep materials dry before construction?

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Answer:Keeping materials such as cement, sand, and gravel dry is crucial because wet sand can compromise the integrity of the concrete mix, potentially weakening the structure. Proper storage under cover protects the longevity and strength of the finished root cellar.

4.Question

How does the author suggest sourcing alternatives to expensive materials?

Answer:The author recommends substituting more costly concrete blocks with viable alternatives like used railroad ties, cedar logs, or large stones. These substitutes can drastically reduce expenses while achieving the required strength and size of the root cellar.

5.Question

What is the underlying philosophy when selecting materials for the root cellar?

Answer:The guiding principle is functionality over aesthetics. The aim is to create a strong and spacious cellar without being concerned about the external appearance.

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Effectiveness in preserving produce is paramount.

6.Question

What unique insulation alternatives does the author suggest for the root cellar?

Answer:Instead of commercial insulation, the author proposes using 'found' materials such as sawdust, loose straw, or dry sand to fill the cores of the blocks in the entrance wall and the doors, showing resourcefulness in material choices.

7.Question

What can you do while waiting for your building materials to arrive?

Answer:As you await delivery of materials, you can prepare by getting your tape measure and shovel ready, indicating the beginning of the physical construction process.

8.Question

Why might someone choose to build an underground root cellar?

Answer:Building an underground root cellar provides an efficient way to store fruits and vegetables, extending their

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shelf life and promoting sustainable living by utilizing simple construction techniques.

9.Question

What are the disadvantages of not adhering to the recommendations for material storage?

Answer:Not following the storage recommendations can lead to compromised material integrity, as moisture can weaken concrete and degrade wood, leading to potentially higher costs in repairs or compromised effectiveness in the long run.

10.Question

How does the author propose to plan the purchase of materials?

Answer:The author suggests buying materials as needed for each construction step, allowing for a more manageable budget and potentially saving on delivery costs by purchasing bulk materials.

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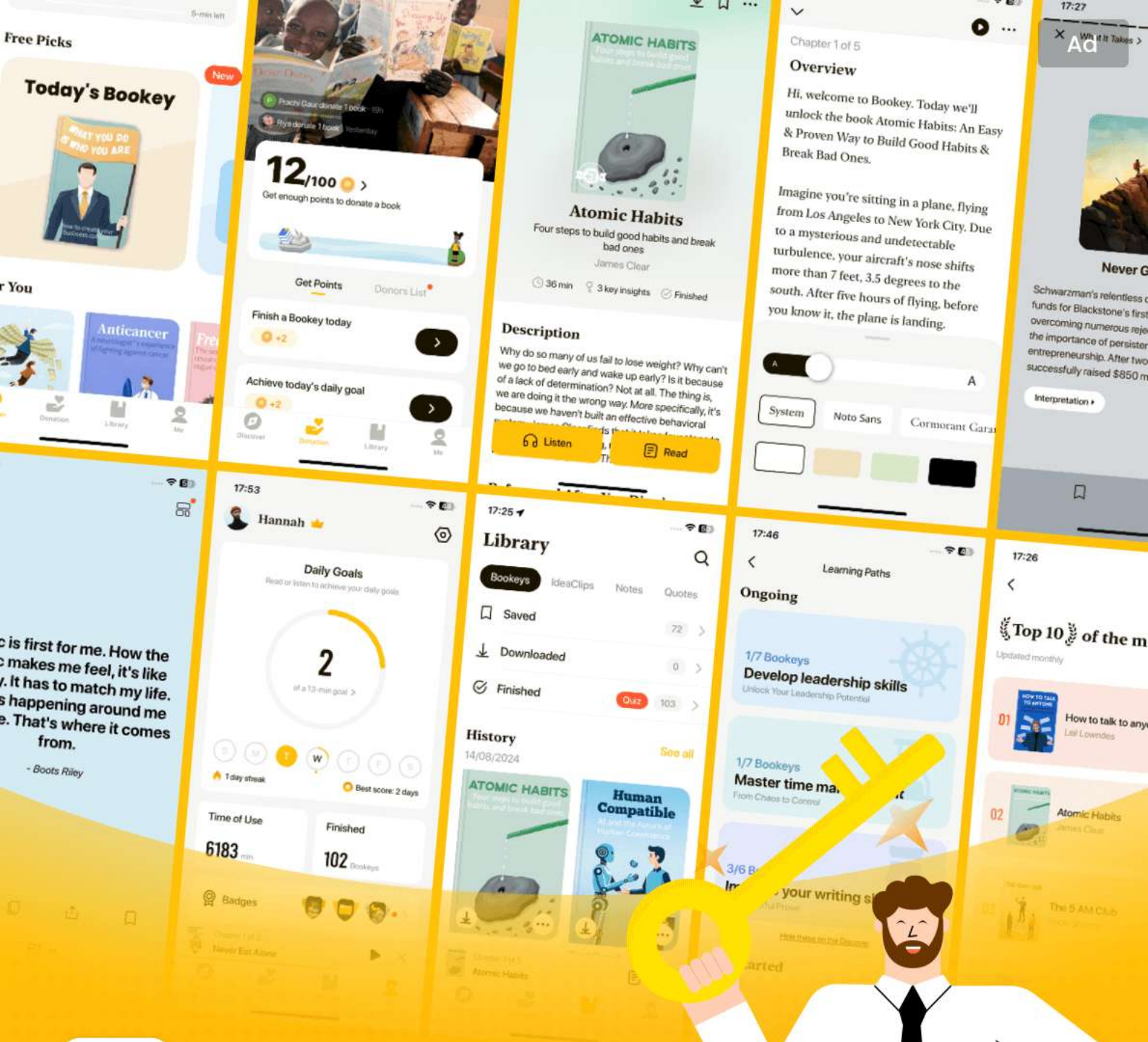

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Chapter 4 | Building the Cellar| Q&A

1.Question

What is the significance of digging a level hole for the root cellar?

Answer:Digging a level hole ensures the stability and durability of the root cellar's structure. A level floor helps in even weight distribution, preventing uneven settling and possible structural failure over time.

2.Question

Why is it important to check that corners are square when marking off the foundation?

Answer:Ensuring that the corners are square allows the walls of the root cellar to be straight and true. This is crucial for both aesthetic appeal and structural integrity, as misaligned corners can lead to complications in further construction stages.

3.Question

How does the process of pouring the footing contribute to the overall success of the root cellar?

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Answer:Pouring a solid footing creates a strong base for the block walls, crucial for withstanding external pressures, moisture, and temperature fluctuations, thereby enhancing the cellar's longevity and effectiveness in preserving produce.

4.Question

Why should excess mortar be wiped off after tooling the joints?

Answer:Wiping off excess mortar not only improves the appearance of the joints but also prevents future cracking and ensures a stronger bond between the blocks and the mortar, enhancing the overall waterproofing of the cellar.

5.Question

What role does the installation of drain tiles play in the construction of a root cellar?

Answer:Installing drain tiles is essential for managing moisture and preventing water accumulation around the cellar. This helps maintain a consistent environment inside the cellar, critical for the proper storage of fruits and vegetables.

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6.Question

How can properly insulating the cellar affect its functionality?

Answer:Proper insulation helps maintain a stable cool temperature inside the cellar, which is vital for preserving the produce efficiently and preventing spoilage, especially in varying climatic conditions.

7.Question

What might be the consequences of not allowing the concrete to cure properly?

Answer:If the concrete does not cure properly, it may weaken and crack, compromising the structural integrity of the cellar and potentially leading to leaks, which would affect the temperature and humidity levels critical for storage.

8.Question

Why is it recommended to install air vents in a root cellar?

Answer:Air vents help to regulate air circulation, maintaining optimal humidity and temperature levels inside the cellar. This ensures that the produce does not rot due to excess

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moisture and remains properly preserved.

9.Question

How does covering the root cellar with soil enhance its effectiveness?

Answer:Covering the root cellar with soil not only provides insulation but also disguises the cellar from potential pests and weather influences, thus helping to keep the internal environment stable for long-term food storage.

10.Question

What are some alternative methods for creating a root cellar if building one is too complex?

Answer:One could consider simpler root cellar options, such as utilizing a basement, digging trenches, or using barrels and pits for storage, which can be just as effective for preserving fruits and vegetables.

Chapter 5 | Adapting the Cellar to Your Needs| Q&A

1.Question

What factors should I consider when determining the size of my root cellar?

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Answer:Consider the number of people in your family and the amount of food you require for storage. A minimum size of 8 feet by 12 feet can house a year's supply of food for a family of 6. For added security as a storm shelter, increase the length by 2 feet for each additional adult you want to accommodate.

2.Question

Why is it recommended to keep the width of the cellar at 8 feet?

Answer:An 8-foot width is structurally strong enough to support the weight of the earth above, and it also aligns perfectly with the standard size of plywood sheets (4x8 feet), making it cost-effective to build.

3.Question

What should I do if I want to make my root cellar longer than 16 feet?

Answer:If your cellar exceeds 16 feet in length, add a partition wall across the center. This will not only support the

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roof but also create convenient storage areas that may have different storage conditions, offering both practicality and privacy.

4.Question

Are electrical lights necessary in a root cellar?

Answer:Electrical lights are not essential, as using a flashlight or lantern suffices. However, installing a couple of lightbulbs can greatly enhance convenience and may also provide some heat during winter.

5.Question

What alternative features can enhance my root cellar's usability?

Answer:Consider adding concrete steps for durability if soil moisture is an issue, walling the stairwell for added stability, or installing a concrete floor for comfort which is more pleasant if used as a shelter.

6.Question

How can I ensure my root cellar remains dry if groundwater is a concern?

Answer:Installing a sump pump can help. This device will

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pump out any water that accumulates in your cellar, directing it away from the structure to keep the storage area dry.

7.Question

How can doing some of the work myself affect the cost of building a root cellar?

Answer:Handling parts of the construction, like pouring a concrete floor with the help of friends, can save significant costs compared to hiring professionals, allowing you to invest more in additional features or materials.

8.Question

What’s the advantage of pouring concrete steps at the same time as the footing?

Answer:Pouring both together can save money by reducing the need for separate trips or materials, maximizing efficiency in your construction process.

Chapter 6 | Get the Most from Your Root Cellar| Q&A

1.Question

What are the key factors to consider for the optimal storage of produce in a root cellar?

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Answer:The two main factors are temperature and humidity. Generally, the coolest and most humid areas are near the door on the floor, ideal for keeping vegetables like potatoes. In contrast, the warmest and driest areas are located at the ceiling toward the back, suitable for items like onions and garlic.

2.Question

Why is it important to choose the right containers for storing different types of produce?

Answer:Different types of produce require different storage conditions; for example, air circulation is crucial for items like potatoes and apples, which thrive in crates or baskets. In contrast, items like onions and garlic need a warm, dry environment, which is best achieved using mesh bags.

3.Question

What precautions should you take regarding the floor containers in your root cellar?

Answer:Floor containers must be raised off the ground to

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avoid rotting and rusting, as well as to prevent mold and insect infestations. Using crude wood pallets or similar supports can effectively elevate containers.

4.Question

How can you ensure the durability and strength of the shelving units in your root cellar?

Answer:To ensure strength, vertical supports should be placed every 4 feet and attached to the roof supports. Adding a piece of scrap aluminum or plastic under these supports can help prevent rot, and treating the wood with preservative can extend its lifespan.

5.Question

What are some common materials that can be used to create storage shelving in a root cellar?

Answer:You can use 2 × 12 lumber for the shelves and 2 × 4 lumber for the braces. Alternatively, heavy-duty metal shelving is also a suitable choice.

6.Question

What is a practical way to make your shelves removable for easy cleaning?

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Answer:When constructing the shelves, do not nail them down after cutting them to size. This allows for easy removal for cleaning and airing out.

7.Question

What items might you consider using for containers if specialized ones are not available?

Answer:You can repurpose crates, metal tubs, trash containers, barrels, or sections of specific tiles. Being resourceful with existing materials is encouraged.

8.Question

How significant is the ceiling height when designing your root cellar?

Answer:Ceiling height is important for maximizing storage space; the back area, where it is warm and dry, is best utilized for produce that requires those conditions.

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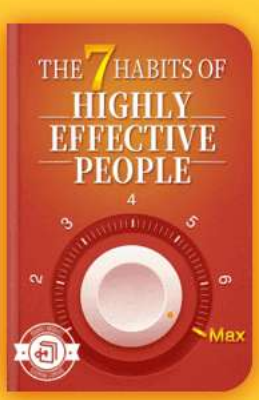

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Chapter 7 | Storage Requirements of Individual Fruits and Vegetables| Q&A

1.Question

What are the basic storage requirements for storing fruits and vegetables in a root cellar?

Answer:Each type of fruit and vegetable has different storage needs, but basic guidelines include: 1) Only store the best produce, removing any damaged or overripe items; 2) Inspect storage weekly for spoilage; 3) Do not wash items before storing to avoid excessive moisture; 4) Separate strong-flavored vegetables from milder ones to prevent flavor transfer; 5) Use layers of straw, dried leaves, or newspaper to absorb odors; 6) Ensure good air circulation for items like onions, pumpkins, and squash; 7) Store tomatoes differently by placing green ones layered in straw or newspaper for months of preservation.

2.Question

Why is it important to separate apples and potatoes when

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storing them?

Answer:Apples and potatoes release gases when stored together; specifically, apples emit ethylene gas, which can cause potatoes to sprout prematurely. Therefore, they should always be stored separately to maintain their freshness and prevent spoilage.

3.Question

How can root vegetables like carrots and turnips be optimally stored?

Answer:Root vegetables such as carrots and turnips thrive when stored in containers layered with moist sand, which keeps them fresh for 9 to 12 months. This environment mimics their natural growing conditions and helps retain moisture, preventing them from drying out.

4.Question

What is the significance of curing squash before storing it in a root cellar?

Answer:Curing squash before storage allows it to develop a tougher skin, which is essential for long-term storage. This

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process strengthens the vegetable's defenses against rot and spoilage, enhancing its ability to last through the winter months.

5.Question

How should greens like lettuce and celery be stored in a root cellar?

Answer:Greens such as celery, head lettuce, endive, and escarole can be replanted in moist sand within the root cellar after being lifted from the garden. This method allows them to maintain their freshness and quality for 1 to 2 months, effectively extending their lifespan post-harvest.

6.Question

Can you provide an example of how to store cabbage effectively?

Answer:Cabbages can be stored effectively by stacking them 3 heads deep in crates or baskets, or by placing them upside down with their roots intact on shelves. Wrapping each head in newspaper or burying them in leaves can also protect them from light and maintain their crispness over time.

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Chapter 8 | Root Cellar Maintenance| Q&A

1.Question

Why is daily monitoring of the root cellar temperature important during the first winter?

Answer:Daily monitoring is crucial to ensure that the temperature remains above freezing, preventing root vegetables from freezing and becoming inedible. This temporary vigilance is necessary as the cellar stabilizes during the cold months.

2.Question

What steps should you take to clean the root cellar annually?

Answer:To clean the root cellar, choose a dry day before harvest in early summer. Remove all containers and shelves, scrub them with soapy water, and let them air dry in the sun for a few days. Sweep or rake the floor, wash the walls, and discard old storage materials like sand and sawdust. Replace these materials in the fall.

3.Question

What can you do in extremely cold weather to maintain

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the cellar's temperature?

Answer:In very cold weather, close the air vent to retain heat. You may also use a kerosene lantern or a couple of 100-watt light bulbs to provide minimal heat, while being cautious not to overheat the space.

4.Question

How does maintaining a root cellar contribute to personal independence?

Answer:Maintaining a root cellar allows individuals to store food for extended periods, reducing reliance on grocery stores and promoting self-sufficiency. It aligns with the mission of Storey Publishing to encourage practical information that fosters personal independence in harmony with the environment.

5.Question

What potential issues can arise from not maintaining your root cellar?

Answer:Neglecting maintenance can lead to plant diseases and insect infestations, compromising the health of stored

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vegetables and wasting the harvest. Regular cleanings are essential to maintain a safe and effective storage environment.

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Chapter 1 of 5
Preface
Since ancient times, people have been crazy for red. For example, red was used for European noble women's makeup and kings' and cardinals' robes. The popularity of red was evident. Throughout history, Britain is not the only country that mobilized state power to protect their secret colors.
The secret to creating a bright red called carmine was hidden for hundreds of years by Spain. This color, as bright as a ruby, is one of the reddest dyes that can be made in nature, so it has long been a favorite in the painter's paint box. But where does this red come from?
After the Spanish Conquistadors set their feet on the lands of South America, they found cochineals, a white parasite living on cactuses.
They used machines similar to a vacuum
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Build Your Own Underground Root Cellar Quiz and Test

Check the Correct Answer on Bookey Website

Chapter 1 | The Right Location| Quiz and Test

1. The ideal location for a root cellar should be on flat ground to prevent flooding.
2. Avoiding large trees when selecting a site for a root cellar is advised due to their extensive root systems.
3. A root cellar should be built far away from the kitchen and garden to minimize visits.

Chapter 2 | Tools| Quiz and Test

1. A pointed-ended, long-handled shovel is essential for digging excavation and moving wet concrete.
2. A cement mixer is necessary when building an underground root cellar according to Phyllis Hobson.
3. You can make your own mortarboard by cutting a 12-inch square from plywood.

Chapter 3 | Materials| Quiz and Test

1. The material list for building a root cellar is

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organized by construction phases.

2. The total estimated cost for building a root cellar is approximately $1,500.

3. Used railroad ties cannot be used as an alternative to concrete blocks in the construction process.

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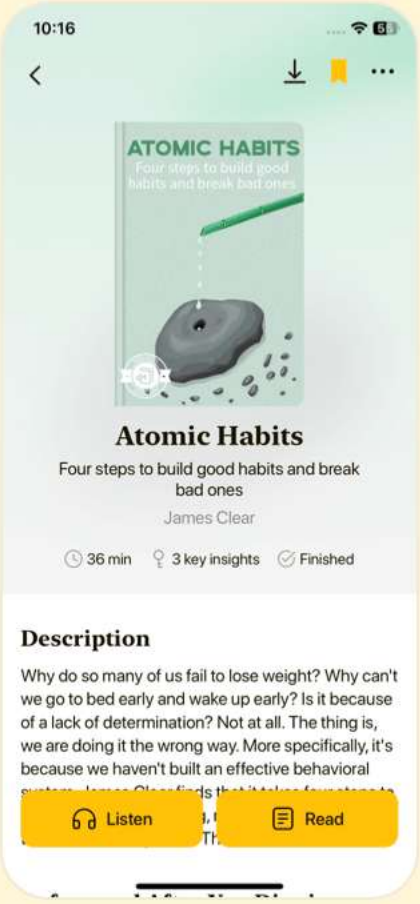
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ATOMIC HABITS
Four steps to build good habits and break bad ones
Atomic Habits
Four steps to build good habits and break bad ones
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Description
Why do so many of us fail to lose weight? Why can't we go to bed early and wake up early? Is it because of a lack of determination? Not at all. The thing is, we are doing it the wrong way. More specifically, it's because we haven't built an effective behavioral
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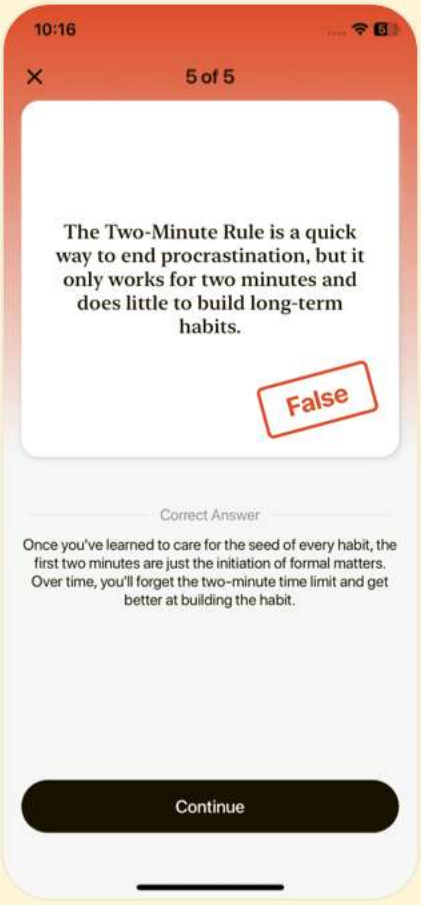
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5 of 5
The Two-Minute Rule is a quick way to end procrastination, but it only works for two minutes and does little to build long-term habits.
False
Correct Answer
Once you've learned to care for the seed of every habit, the first two minutes are just the initiation of formal matters. Over time, you'll forget the two-minute time limit and get better at building the habit.
Continue

Chapter 4 | Building the Cellar| Quiz and Test

1. The excavation for the root cellar should measure 20 feet long, 15 feet wide, and 5 feet deep.
2. Installing a vent hole in the roof is essential for proper ventilation of the underground root cellar.
3. The first course of blocks should be set without the use of mortar for waterproofing.

Chapter 5 | Adapting the Cellar to Your Needs| Quiz and Test

1. An 8-foot by 12-foot root cellar can accommodate a year's food supply for a family of 6.
2. For added shelter capacity, the root cellar can be increased to 8 feet by 25 feet.
3. Installing a sump pump is essential in areas with underground water to protect the cellar.

Chapter 6 | Get the Most from Your Root Cellar| Quiz and Test

1. The coolest area in a root cellar is typically near the ceiling towards the back.
2. It's ideal to elevate all containers from the dirt floor in a

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root cellar.

3. Wooden shelving in a root cellar should be treated with wood preservative for longevity.

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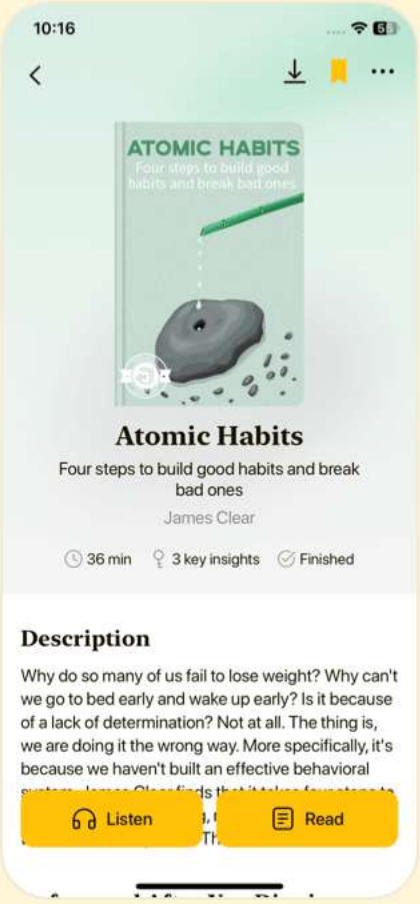
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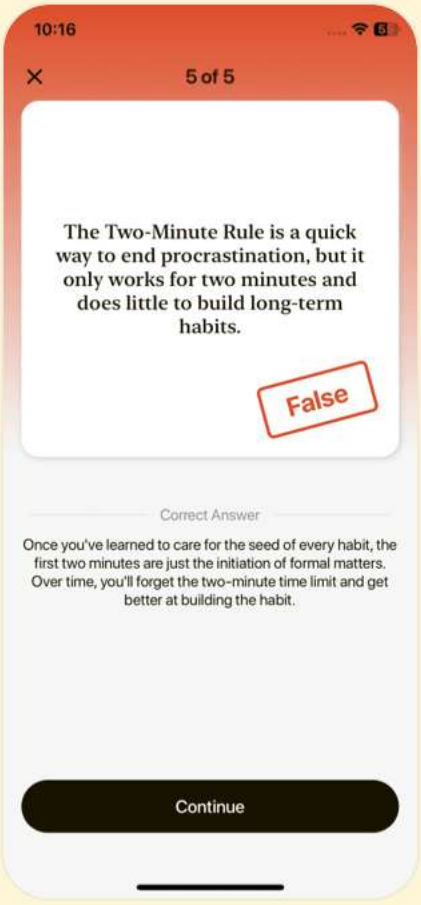
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Continue

Chapter 7 | Storage Requirements of Individual Fruits and Vegetables| Quiz and Test

1. Produce should be washed before storage to eliminate any dirt and prevent spoilage.
2. Cabbages can be stored upside down with their roots intact, wrapped in newspaper or buried in leaves.
3. Root vegetables like beets and carrots should be stored in dry conditions without any coverings.

Chapter 8 | Root Cellar Maintenance| Quiz and Test

1. Root cellars require daily maintenance primarily during the winter season.
2. It is safe to use excessive heat sources inside a root cellar to maintain temperature.
3. Annual cleaning of the root cellar should occur in early summer, just before harvest.

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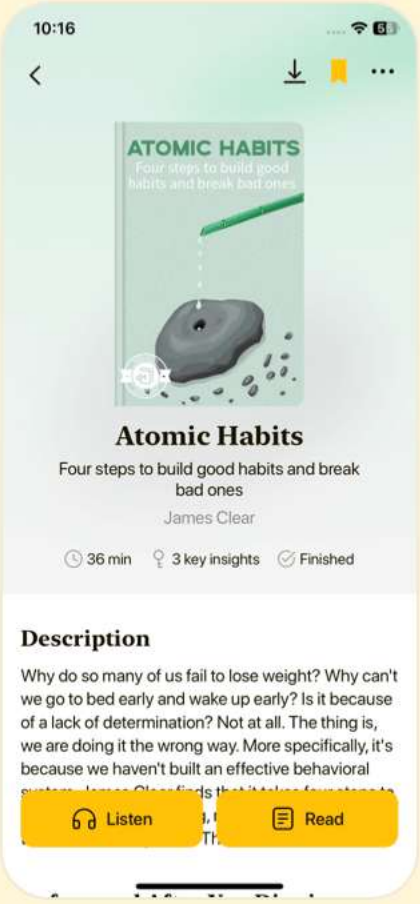
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ATOMIC HABITS
Four steps to build good habits and break bad ones
Atomic Habits
Four steps to build good habits and break bad ones
James Clear
36 min
3 key insights
Finished
Description
Why do so many of us fail to lose weight? Why can't we go to bed early and wake up early? Is it because of a lack of determination? Not at all. The thing is, we are doing it the wrong way. More specifically, it's because we haven't built an effective behavioral
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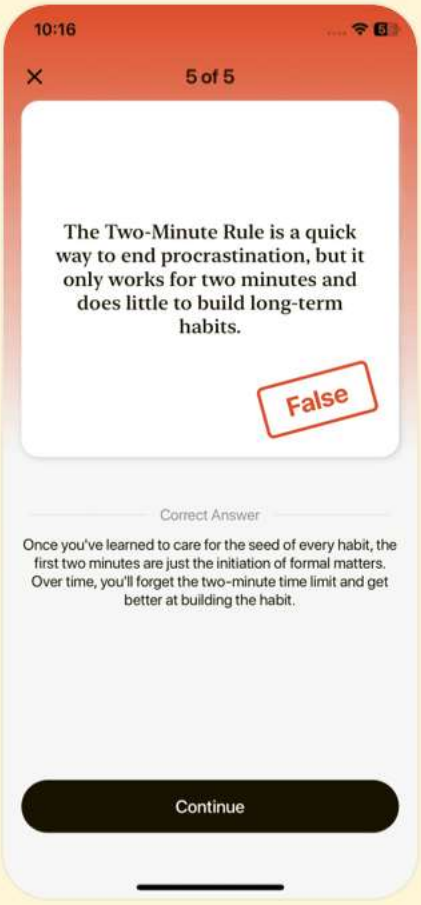
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5 of 5
The Two-Minute Rule is a quick way to end procrastination, but it only works for two minutes and does little to build long-term habits.
False
Correct Answer
Once you've learned to care for the seed of every habit, the first two minutes are just the initiation of formal matters. Over time, you'll forget the two-minute time limit and get better at building the habit.
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